



FORESTRY NEWS



Acting Fire Management Officer



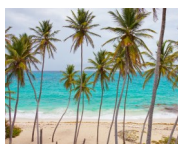
Thomas Skinner comes to the Fort Apache Agency from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) but he is not new to Indian Country. He actually

Science. From 1988 to 1990, Mr. Skinner worked for the USFS Southern Forest Experiment Station in Starkville, MS and then returned to NM to work for the BIA as the Zuni Agency FMO. While there, Thomas met his wife, Cindy, who was working as a Range Conservationist for the Pueblo of Zuni at the time. They remained in Zuni until 1996 when Mr. Skinner accepted an FMO job with the FWS in Texas. Texas remained their home until 1999 when he



started his forestry career in 1985 as a temporary inventory forester for the Northern Pueblos Agency in Espanola, NM. While there he was involved in writing the Wilderness Fire Management Plan for the Taos-Blue Lake Wilderness area on the Taos Pueblo. This job came after graduating from Colorado State University first with a Bachelor's degree in Zoology with a Natural Resources minor and then earning a Master's degree from the same institution in Fire

transferred to WA to work in the Mid-Columbia River National Wildlife Refuge Complex. Thomas worked in several locations while working on this complex of refuges and served for five years during this time as the Fire Planner for the FWS Regional Office. Interestingly, Hawaii, is part of that FWS region and Thomas got to teach S-336 in Hawaii during this time. It was a tough assignment, but someone had to do it!



Mr. Skinner applied for both the Fuel Specialist and the FMO jobs at Fort Apache. He accepted the Fuel Specialist position which was advertised first, but almost upon arrival was appointed as the Acting FMO. He may end up with more hats than he bargained for! Thomas is happy to be back in the Southwest. He was not unfamiliar with the fire program at Fort Apache since years ago he took several fire classes here. He wanted to state that "I am excited to be participating in a dynamic fire program at Fort Apache. I look forward to helping the program to continue to grow and to help the staff develop and gain additional fire qualifications." Thomas and Cindy, who were married in 1993, have an 18-year-old daughter and a 16-year-old son. Cindy is currently the Director for the "Ready for Kindergarten Program" for the Kennewick School District in WA and will be relocating to AZ at a later date.

* New Fire Plan *

The new Wildland Fire Management Plan (WFMP) is in the final stages of review. A lot of work has gone into its preparation. As stated in the document introduction "The purpose of the BIA Fort Apache Agency WFMP is to identify and integrate all wildland fire management guidance, direction, and activities required to implement national wildland fire policy and management guidance. Overall direction from the WFMP, and its associated Annual Operating Plans, allows fire to be restored as an integral part of ecosystems in order to meet resource management objectives and to improve protection of human life, property, and resources." Questions or comments regarding the WFMP or its Environmental Assessment should be directed to Juliette Jeanne in the BIA Branch of EQS.

REQUIRED PHYSICAL, PACK TEST AND REFRESHER

Be sure and get with Candy Lupe if you plan on fighting fire this year. A complete physical with a new contractor is required as are the annual pack test and refresher. Fire managers are trying to get all these requirements completed earlier this year due to the potential for an early fire season. A preseason fire meeting with Regional and Agency staff was held on February 5, 2015.

